

12 Competencies

for Measuring Health & Well-being
for Human & Social Capital



“If there is anything the last two years have taught us, it’s that how an organization treats its employees has a profound impact on its bottom line. We’re introducing the 12 Competencies to help organizations rethink what could be included in their health and well-being strategies and how they can track and measure them.”



*Rachel Hodgdon
President and CEO
International WELL Building Institute*

Companies face mounting pressure from investors and other stakeholders to better define, track and measure their human and social capital strategies within their ESG, CSR, sustainability and regulatory disclosures and reporting.¹⁻³ While there is currently no universally accepted way to measure human and social capital,^{4,5} there is growing consensus that health and well-being need to be core components.⁵⁻⁷ However, industry standards and benchmarks are currently underdeveloped and any metrics on health tend to over-emphasize lagging indicators of health around disease and injury rather than focusing on broader systemic outcomes.⁸ Companies need a framework for identifying and tracking these metrics and a common language for communicating their strategies on health and well-being to investors and others who are requiring disclosure and transparency.^{2,3}

The 12 Competencies for Measuring Health & Well-being for Human & Social Capital provides companies a way to re-think the ways in which health and well-being strategies can help drive their organizational culture, strategy and ESG reporting. At the same time, the 12 Competencies offers a research-based framework that helps organizations measure and track the impact of their investments in health and well-being on multiple and connected levels of influence over time.

The 12 Competencies framework draws on insights from IWBI’s experience translating research to practice from 35,000+ projects in 109 countries that are enrolled in the WELL ecosystem, representing 3.4 billion square feet. It also draws on guidance and input from our IWBI global Research Advisory and our 15 WELL survey providers, who cumulatively have surveyed more than 1.5 million people globally.

“Human and social capital references how a company manages the relationship with its workforce, the societies in which it operates and the political environment, representing the overall health and well-being of its people on multiple scales.”

S&P 500



Figure 1: 12 Competencies for Measuring Health & Well-being for Human & Social Capital

Companies are looking for best practices to drive evidence-based improvements across their assets and their organizations, and, most importantly, to improve the health and well-being of their people.⁹ They want to understand the relationship between health, well-being and performance metrics.¹⁰ They are seeking guidance to help them benchmark their actions against their peers in annual environmental, social and governance (ESG) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting.¹¹ And in an era where the health of employees is increasingly understood to be material to corporate performance, the need for substantiated data and benchmarkable metrics on health and well-being is increasingly important,¹² particularly for an investment community looking to mitigate risk, evaluate financial performance and identify opportunity.^{13, 14}

To address these gaps, we need a different approach for measuring and tracking health and well-being that can be applied in different reporting platforms. In particular, we need a transdisciplinary¹⁵⁻¹⁷ and adaptive¹⁸ approach that provides:

- A research-based framework for companies to use to initiate efforts and track progress over time in a way that encourages transparency.
- Categories that are broad enough to remain stable for use in benchmarking, strategic planning and annual reporting.
- Consistent categories that also allow for customization.
- A holistic framework that shows the relationship between specific metrics of health and well-being at multiple scales.

The 12 Competencies begins to address these needs. The 12 Competencies is organized into five levels referencing the socio-ecological framework¹⁹ used extensively in public health. This structure helps users explore ways in which health, well-being and other human and social capital outcomes interrelate across multiple scales of influence, including individual, organizational, environmental, community and global. Within each scale, there are target areas of achievement or “competencies” for organizations to track and monitor (see Figure 1). Each competency is supported by more detailed measurement categories. This multi-level, structured approach helps organizations consider ways to improve measurement of health and well-being for human and social capital in a holistic, logical and easily communicated fashion.

SCALE	12 COMPETENCIES	MEASUREMENT CATEGORIES
Individual	Health and well-being	Physical and mental health, mental health resilience, health behaviors
	Thriving	Work-life balance, role strain, purpose, energy, ability to recharge
	Performance energy and performance motivation	Employee thriving, work structure and relationships, engagement, perceived core and support
	Employee effectiveness	Perceived focus, attention and performance, job satisfaction
Organizational	Organizational performance	Organizational, leadership and employee effectiveness, financial well-being
	Organizational culture and engagement	Organizational strategy and execution, structure, relationships and communication, talent management, engagement
	Risk management	Diversity, equity and inclusion, emergency preparedness, health and safety, asset and organizational resilience
	Environment of care and support	Workplace and leadership, actual and perceived support of well-being, collective well-being
Environmental	Ambient environmental quality	Performance testing on light, air quality, thermal comfort, acoustics, water quality
	Occupant and market perceptions of indoor environmental quality	Perceived satisfaction, indoor environmental quality, health and safety, aesthetics and design, inclusive design, design for sense of place
Community	Community and stakeholder engagement	Community engagement policies and initiatives, shared/collective values and practices, location and amenities, equity and historical acknowledgement
Global	Environmental, social and governance (ESG) transparency and reporting	ESG, CSR, UN SDGs, carbon reporting, green building standards, natural capital, biodiversity impact reporting

Figure 2: The 12 Competencies and supporting measurement categories.

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Based on their specific needs, organizations can identify competencies of interest and supporting metrics from the framework to track over time. Companies can track multiple metrics within a single competency. For example, to measure health and well-being at the level of individual employees, companies can monitor metrics that address physical and mental health and mental health resilience (see Figure 2). The framework also shows the relationship between competencies. For example, to fully understand the drivers for individual health outcomes, organizations can also collect data on organizational culture and an environment of care and support.

In short, the 12 Competencies provides a holistic, research-based framework that helps organizations better integrate consideration of health, well-being and other dimensions of human and social capital into their decision-making. By adopting the 12 Competencies, organizations showcase a commitment to health and humanity as a strategic priority.

How did we get here?

To propose a solution for measuring health and well-being for human and social capital, we relied on our experience of translating research to practice. IWBI's Research Team led the development of the 12 Competencies in consultation with IWBI's network of global Research Advisors and 15 survey providers over a 12-month period. Using an adaptive and transdisciplinary approach, we drew upon our strengths in four areas:

HOLISTIC



Adapted the socio-ecological framework for companies to identify five scales to track data and drew on the conceptual model in IWBI's Global Research Agenda

COLLABORATIVE



Convened a working group comprised of global IWBI Research Advisory members and survey providers

INTERDISCIPLINARY



Used an adaptive approach to reach consensus on core categories.

DATA-DRIVEN



Identified known metrics and synthesized key themes that have been used by researchers in over 1.5 million survey data points

The 12 Competencies reflect multiple rounds of internal, industry and subject matter expert reviews. However, the framework and underlying metrics will continue to evolve in collaboration with our global network of IWBI customers, partners and stakeholders. The 12 Competencies framework is designed to be flexible, allowing additional aspects of human and social capital (e.g., supply chain, regional policy or national economic conditions) to be incorporated over time.

Conclusion

In a moment when investment in people and the places where they spend their time are being closely tracked and more critically examined, leading companies are recognizing the need to demonstrate not just their effort, but also the impact of that effort, especially in terms of recruitment and retention. Given the current patchwork of approaches to ESG and CSR reporting on health and well-being, a holistic approach across multiple scales of influence is imperative.

IWBI's 12 Competencies for Measuring Health & Well-being for Human & Social Capital provides a research-driven framework to help organizations re-think their approach to promoting health and well-being for their employees, customers, and broader community and showcase that commitment to investors, regulators, and society at large.

About the International WELL Building Institute

The International WELL Building Institute (IWBI) is a public benefit corporation and the world's leading organization focused on deploying people-first places to advance a global culture of health. IWBI mobilizes its community through the administration of the WELL Building Standard (WELL) and the WELL Health-Safety Rating, management of the WELL AP credential, the pursuit of applicable research, the development of educational resources, and advocacy for policies that promote health and well-being everywhere. More information on WELL can be found at www.wellcertified.com.

Contact 12Competencies@wellcertified.com for more information

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